



CITY OF WESTMINSTER TREE COMMISSION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, June 10, 2020, at 4:30 PM

Virtual Meeting via Zoom and broadcasted live on the City Facebook Page
Westminster, Maryland 21157

A meeting of the City of Westminster Tree Commission was held virtually via Zoom and broadcasted live on the City Facebook Page, on June 10, 2020, at 4:30 PM.

Chair Steve Allgeier, Vice-Chair Cindy May, and Commissioner Tim Bangerd were present. City staff Mark Depo, Andrea Gerhard, Andrew Gray, Eric Schlitzer, and Samantha Schlitzer were present.

The following members of the public were present: Dr. Robert Wack.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Allgeier requested a motion to approve the meeting summary of March 11, 2020. Commissioner Bangerd motioned to approve the meeting summary. Commissioner May seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Chair Allgeier opened Item A – Tree Buffer Planting along Copps Branch. Chair Allgeier recognized Dr. Robert Wack, present on behalf of the Westminster High School Environmental Action Club (EAC). Dr. Wack explained that the project had 12-15 actively participating students who are learning about stream ecology. Chair Allgeier added that the EAC is in search of activity related to the project and proposed planting trees to improve the riparian buffer along the stream. An informal presentation was given to the Mayor and Common Council in 2019.

Dr. Wack stated that the City could engage in a tree banking program and sell forest bank credits to land developers for future development. Chair Allgeier noted that the City will not lose access to the property and will benefit by not having to mow the property as much. He shared his excitement that the new activity would enhance the forest area and improve water quality.

Chair Allgeier asked if mowing could be further reduced by using herbicidal treatments. Mr. Schlitzer inquired as to the distance from the stream that the trees would be planted. Dr. Wack stated approximately 20 feet on either side, an area would be marked off to plant some trees each year. Chair Allgeier added that the student volunteers could also do weeding and additional maintenance as part of the project.

Vice-Chair May motioned to move forward with the EAC providing a formal proposal to the Mayor and Common Council for consideration of planting a tree buffer along Copps Branch. Commissioner Bangerd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Allgeier opened Item B – 2020 Urban and Community Forestry Workshop. Ms. Schlitzer stated that she and Mr. Gray had been in communication with Bartlett Tree Experts to explore the option of a virtual workshop if a physical one was not available due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Commission unanimously agreed to further discussion between City staff and Bartlett to host a virtual workshop.

Chair Allgeier opened Item C – 2020 Arbor Day Celebration – Mr. Gray stated that due to COVID-19, the City was unable to hold its annual Arbor Day celebration. After speaking with Maryland Department of Natural Resources representative Anne Gilbert, many communities are hosting virtual Arbor Day celebrations and conducting plantings on the six-month Arbor Day anniversary, which is October 24, 2020.

Mr. Schlitzer stated his intention for Arbor Day was to replace several trees on the grounds of City Hall that were damaged in the February 2020 tornado. Mr. Gray added that the physical plantings would be completed by City staff, and no members of the public would be present. Ms. Schlitzer suggested streaming a Facebook Live video for people to watch from home.

The Commission unanimously agreed to replant lost trees at City Hall and live-stream the event.

Chair Allgeier opened Item D – Review of the City Comprehensive Tree Plan. Mr. Gray mentioned that the Commission review the Comprehensive Tree Plan and provide any comments to improve the Plan by August 3, 2020. City staff will review comments to incorporate them into the draft document for consideration of approval during the September 2020 meeting.

Chair Allgeier opened Item E – 2020 Commission Elections. Mr. Gray mentioned that the Commission has not conducted an election since at least 2015, and since that time, one new Commission member has been appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council.

Commissioner Bangerd motioned to re-elect Steve Allgeier to the position of Tree Commission Chair. Commissioner May seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0 with one recusal from Chair Allgeier.

Chair Allgeier motioned to re-elect Cindy May to the position of Tree Commission Vice-Chair. Commissioner Bangerd seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0 with one recusal from Vice-Chair May.

Staff and Public Comments

Mr. Gray mentioned that the Tree Commission currently has no known rules of order and procedure. City staff will draft a set of proposed rules of order and procedure for the Commission to review at its September 2020 meeting. He then reminded the Commission members to participate in the 2020 United States Census if they have not already done so.

Mr. Schlitzer presented photos of trees that had been planted along Main Street and Pennsylvania Avenue for Arbor Week, including two Service Berry trees, a Cherry tree, and a Hawthorne tree.

Chair Allgeier inquired if the City still maintained the parking lot garden along West Main Street across from Carroll Street. Mr. Schlitzer stated that the City no longer maintains it.

Mr. Depo reported that Governor Hogan's latest update on the Maryland Roadmap to Recovery included restaurants opening indoor dining at 50% capacity, as well as outdoor ceremonies, pools, and other outdoor venue types. This will help the City in coordinating future events.

The Commission adjourned at 5:21 PM.